

**DART Commission Meeting
Unapproved Minutes
Municipal Service Center
May 23, 2013**

Present: Mary LaForet, Char Williams, Donna Swain, Richard Olson, Pat McFarland, Marty Wazbinski

Staff Present: Karen Murphy, Jan Yuergens

Char Williams called the meeting to order at 1:33 pm

Meeting Minutes from the March 2012 meeting were approved.

Member Update

Senior Services appointed and City Council approved Richard Olson as the Senior Services representative for the DART Commission.

Staff Update

The DART supervisor that was hired in 2012 was not a good fit for the Dial-A-Ride operation. DART is in the process of conducting interviews for another supervisor.

Bus Replacement

Yuergens reported that federal grants have been secured for three (3) replacement busses. Bus are on order should be delivered in the fall of 2013.

MDOT Update

Murphy presented information on the City of Midland becoming a part of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), called Midland Area Transportation Study (MATS). This new designation is based on the 2010 population census, which changed DART's previous classification with MDOT as a non-urban transit agency to a small urban transit agency. This new MPO classification will provide additional road funding for the City of Midland and surrounding designated urban area. It is unclear if additional funding will be available for transit. Staff is working with MDOT, The FTA and the MATS MPO to learn about this new designation and funding. All DART services should remain the same and funding levels are also expected to remain the same. Passengers should not see any changes as a result of change.

The commission members reviewed the 2014 Accessibility Plan. Hours of service, service area and the number of busses in the fleet have not changed. Swain noted that the DART Commission meets annually. With the annual meeting change to once per year, the accessibility plan was unanimously approved by the commission.

ARRA Funding Update

The City of Midland received a \$90,000 ARRA grant for the purchase of new dispatch software and mobile data terminals. After a comprehensive search a vendor was selected based on criteria of a 25% - 30% performance increase. DART implemented the new dispatch software on August 21, 2013. It became immediately apparent that the software did not perform as well as our previous software provider. In addition to performance issues passengers complained about long ride times, not being able to book rides, late stops and busses not showing up for rides booked. The City of Midland met with the vendor on a weekly basis for several months and made the determination to implement another dispatch software system on March 8, 2013. The system implemented by March 8, 2013 was a software solution previously used by Dial-A-Ride but with many upgraded features. The goal in conversion to this system was to implement it without any disruption to passengers. DART was able to honor time frames for all standing orders and to continue to book rides throughout the hour instead of just on the half hour. Overall this software is performing effectively for riders. It does take longer to book rides and some passengers have difficulty with the 20 minute window times not being on the half hour.

The dispatch system implemented on March 8, 2013 is too new at this time to do any efficiency comparisons. Once the system has been in use for several months staff with benchmark mileage and vehicle hours comparisons to our previous system which booked rides only on the half hour. Yuergens suggested that there may also be a need to survey passengers regarding their preference on booking rides on the half hour or throughout the hour due to the difficulty many of the riders have with booking rides throughout the hour.

The City of Midland returned the \$90,000 ARRA grant to MDOT due to the time constraints of using the grant by September 30, 2013. MDOT provided the City of Midland with another grant in the amount of \$66,000 to purchase a replacement bus that had met age and mileage requirements. The bus was placed on order and delivery is expected in September 2013.

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New Business

Richard Olson asked if DART was considering natural gas for busses as an alternate fuel source. Murphy explained that the City of Midland does not currently have a filling station for natural gas.

Commission members requested information on the revenue generated from advertising on the busses. Yurgens will look into this and provide information at the next DART Commission meeting.

Public Comment

Pat McFarland offered to help with any surveys that DART may do in the future.

Meeting was adjourned at 2.45 pm.

Respectfully,

Jan Yurgens
Assistant Director of Public Services

MDOT Required Signature

Charlotte Williams
Chair, DART Commission